



**DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC SECURITY**

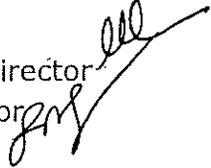
*Your Partner For A Stronger Arizona*

**DIVISION OF DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES (DDD) AND REHABILITATION  
SERVICES ADMINISTRATION/VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (RSA/VR)**

**INTER-AGENCY PROTOCOL FOR MUTUAL CLIENTS**

**DATE:** August 1, 2015

**TO:** All DDD Support Coordinators And Employment Specialists  
All Rehabilitation Services Administration/Vocational  
Rehabilitation Staff

**FROM:** Laura L. Love, Ph.D., DDD Assistant Director   
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**SUBJECT:** Procedures for Individuals Who Are Mutually Eligible for VR and  
DDD Services

The purpose of this memorandum is to formalize performance expectations for staff of both the Division of Developmental Disabilities and Rehabilitation Services Administration/Vocational Rehabilitation in the area of joint employment programming. This memorandum complies with the regulations, policies and procedures unique to each program office.

**MISSION STATEMENTS**

The importance and value of work for individuals with disabilities is honored by both programs.

The mission of the Rehabilitation Services Administration's Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program is to work with individuals with disabilities to achieve their goals; for employment and independence.

The mission of the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) is that individuals with developmental disabilities are valued and contributing members of their communities and are involved and participation in their communities based on their own choices.

VR and DDD both provide employment-related services and supports unique to that agency in support of the program's mission.

## **GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF COOPERATION AND COLLABORATION**

The following principles of how staff will work together apply equally to VR and DDD staff:

- Program staff will respect and honor the unique vision, mission and role of the other's program.
- To the extent possible, agencies will align their policies and procedures to create the greatest opportunities for coordination and collaboration. Joint procedures should enhance a seamless transition between the agencies for mutual customers.
- Creativity and joint decision making in concert with, and on behalf of, mutual customers is essential for successful outcomes.
- All individuals will be afforded the opportunity to exercise informed choice throughout their involvement in either program. The desires and needs of the individual are to be respected.
- VR, DDD, and contracted provider staff work as part of the same team with the individual served, family and others.

### **JOINT PROGRAMMING**

The roles and responsibilities of VR and DDD field staff potentially intersect in a number of ways:

- In the process of working with an individual, field staff might learn that the individual is a recipient of the other program's services.
- Staff from either program might identify the other as a potential partner in the individual's rehabilitation program.
- Referral to the other program may be appropriate for a particular service or support.

In any of these circumstances, staff from VR and DDD has the responsibility to invite each other to attend related Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) or Individual Support Plan (ISP) development and review meetings.

### **SHARING INFORMATION**

When either program has identified the potential for involvement of the other program in meeting an individual's needs, the program will request the individual sign a release of information before sharing information with the other agency.

In all circumstances, an individual's written consent is required prior to sharing any personal information between agencies.

## **IMPACT OF DDD ELIGIBILITY ON EMPLOYMENT SERVICES**

With respect to Division of Developmental Disabilities funded employment supports and services, DDD program participants fall within one of three eligibility categories that impact the type of services they might receive.

- Arizona Long Term Care System (ALTCS) Eligible:

Individuals who are eligible for ALTCS are eligible to receive ongoing employment supports and services, as identified by their ISP teams. As part of its contract with the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS), DDD must refer all ALTCS-eligible individuals to VR when their employment goals are compatible with those of the VR program. ALTCS funded individuals will be referred to VR when the individual's employment goal is competitive and integrated employment.

- State-Only or Targeted Case Management (TCM) Eligible:  
Individuals who are State-Only or Targeted Case Management funded will be referred to VR when the individual's employment goal is competitive and integrated employment AND when:
  - The individual's ISP team believes the individual may be able to benefit from VR services and funding is available for any needed ongoing supports upon completion of the VR program; or
  - The individual's ISP team believes the individual may be able to benefit from VR services and no ongoing supports are needed; or
  - The individual requests employment services and there is insufficient documentation to judge whether or not that person will need ongoing supports.

## **REFERRAL PROCESS**

A referral from DDD to the VR program is appropriate when the individual's employment goal is consistent with the mission of the VR program as follows:

- The individual's goal is to become competitively employed in an integrated community setting and; and
- The individual needs VR services to achieve a successful employment outcome.

All referrals between the two agencies should be made according to procedures established jointly and included in this memorandum.

The VR Counselor will complete the intake and eligibility process. A VR group orientation will not be required for DDD members referred according to the procedures established within this memorandum. If it is determined that ongoing

supports will be needed to maintain the individual's employment success, the VR Counselor will complete the IPE after confirming the availability of long term supports. If the DDD eligible member applies directly to the VR program the VR Counselor will contact the appropriate DDD Employment Services Specialist.

### **VR/DDD SERVICE COLLABORATION**

#### **VR RESPONSIBILITIES:**

VR Counselors must notify the individual's DDD Support Coordinator and/or Employment Service Specialist of any changes in the individual's employment goal or service needs.

- VR staff has the responsibility to obtain a release of information for DDD and invite the DDD Support Coordinator and/or the Employment Services Specialist to collaborative meetings including intake, IPE development, the employment status or Status 22 meeting, and any other meetings that dual service provision may affect.
- VR staff has the responsibility to send documentation the individual requests to DDD Support Coordinator and Employment Services Specialist as soon as they are sent to the individual which can include a copy of the eligibility letter, IPE, closure letters, denial letters, loss of contact letters or any other notification of change of status.
- VR should contact the DDD Employment Services Specialist for follow-up prior to the decision to close due to the member's failure to respond to VR contacts.
- VR Counselors must schedule an employment status or Status 22 staffing with the DDD Support Coordinator prior to transition to DDD for employment services. The meeting should be scheduled so as to provide DDD with sufficient time to authorize the services before VR places the individual into employment status. In addition, the individual, RSA, DDD, and service vendor must agree that the employment is stable and that VR funded services are no longer required.

For the VR program, successful employment is achieved when:

- The individual is employed in an integrated setting earning at or above minimum wage;
- The employment outcome is consistent with the individual's vocational goal;
- Employment has stabilized and all necessary supports to maintain the individual in employment are in place; and,

- There is agreement by the individual, employer, and VR that employment performance meets expectations.
- A "successful rehabilitation" is achieved when the individual's employment outcome has been maintained for a minimum of 90 days after placement in employment status (Status 22).

### **DDD RESPONSIBILITIES:**

DDD Support Coordinators must notify the individual's VR counselor of any changes in the individual's ALTCS status. If the individual is receiving VR services based on ALTCS eligibility for the provision of long-term employment support services, a loss of such eligibility may result in the individual's inability to continue with VR services.

- DDD staff has the responsibility to obtain a release of information for VR and invite the VR Counselor to collaborative meetings including intake, ISP development and any other meetings that dual service provision may affect.
- DDD staff has the responsibility to send documentation the individual requests to their VR Counselor including copies of the member's IEP, ISP, medical and other documentation supporting the member's eligibility determination for VR services.
- The DDD Support Coordinator and the Employment Services Specialist will be in attendance at the Status 22 meeting to ensure DDD services are in place to maintain employment.

### **RE-INVOLVEMENT OF VR AFTER VR CLOSURE**

A referral to VR would be appropriate if:

- The individual wants to pursue a new employment goal and needs VR services to achieve that goal or;
- The individual is in danger of losing his/her job because of disability-related issues which require VR involvement; or
- The individual has a new disability that requires VR employment-related services.

A referral to VR after an individual's case is closed is appropriate when there is a need for a new IPE to help prepare the individual for a progressive employment move, different type of employment or to prepare the individual for non-supported, competitive employment. DDD Individual Supported Employment (ISE)/job search may be more appropriate service if these criteria are not met.